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Minutes of the seventh meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts held Friday, March 17, 1911.

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS, Held Friday March 17, 1911.

The seventh meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts was held in its office in the Lemon Building, Washington, D. C., on Friday, March 17, 1911. The following members were present:

Mr. Burnham, the Chairman;

Mr. Olmsted;

Mr. French;

Mr. Gilbert; also

Colonel Spencer Cosby, the Secretary and Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 10:10 A. M., and immediately proceeded to the business before it.

1. The minutes of the preceding meeting, held February 15, 1911, were presented and approved.

2. The Secretary read a letter from Senator Smoot, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Printing of Congress, stating that he had given directions that the Commission of Fine Arts be listed in the next edition of the Congressional Directory.

3. The Secretary informed the Commission that the Secretary of War has assigned two rooms (Nos. 8 & 9, 4th floor, Lemon Building), in addition to room No. 7, to the Commission of Fine Arts, and submitted two plans for remodeling all rooms, now assigned to the Commission, to meet its needs. After discussion and alteration of the plan providing two rooms for the Commission, one large and one small, this

to pay for all necessary labor, and
plan was approved and the Secretary authorized/to make all necessary purchases and contracts for remodeling the rooms, and for furnishing them.

4. Upon motion duly made and seconded it was unanimously

RESOLVED, That the Members and the Secretary of the Commission of Fine Arts, when traveling upon official business, shall be entitled to reimbursement of actual expenses which shall be understood to include the following expenditures:

1. Actual fares on railroads, steamboats, and other conveyances, by the shortest practicable route, including travel on limited trains, and the hire of special transportation where there are no regular means of conveyance.

2. Fares actually paid for statercom, drawing room, or seat in parlor car, or compartment or section in Pullman sleeper at night, or for stateroom on boats, steamers, &c.

3. Taxicab, cab, or other vehicle hire to and from depots and hotels, and wherever else necessary to facilitate transacting business of the Commission.

4. Room, including bath, in hotels at a rate not greater than ten dollars per day.

5. Actual cost of meals not to exceed eight dollars per day.

6. Cost of transporting and transferring baggage; all necessary fees or tips to porters, stewards, expressmen, &c; reasonable cost of laundering, cleaning and pressing clothes, and shining shoes; reasonable allowance for baths; charges for clerical or other assistance; rent of steamer chair and rug; cost of such miscellaneous supplies or repairs as an exigency demands; the employment of guides when necessary; and charges for local and long distance telephone service, and for telegrams, on public business. amended July 13, 1917 - q.v.

5. Upon motion duly made and seconded the Secretary was authorized to have all the Park Commission Plans, except the enlarged photographs, put in good condition; also to loan them to the proper authorities, upon their request, for exhibition at the City Planning Exhibition to be held at Philadelphia in May, 1911. It was decided to authorize Mr. Glenn Brown to act as the representative of the Commission in supervising the hanging of the plans at the Philadelphia Exhibition and at other exhibitions hereafter at which he will be willing to act. In each case all his expenses are to be met by the parties to whom the plans are loaned. Articles of Agreement governing the loan of these plans were read by the Secretary and were approved, subject, however, to any suggestions the members desire to make upon further consideration.

6. The Secretary read a letter from Count Moltke, the Danish Minister, submitting a scheme for a summer library with fountain prepared by Mr. John Gelert, sculptor,

6. Cost of transporting and transferring baggage; all necessary fees or tips to porters, stewards, expressmen, &c; reasonable cost of laundering, cleaning and pressing clothes, and shining shoes; reasonable allowance for baths; charges for clerical or other assistance; rent of steamer chair and rugs; cost of such miscellaneous supplies or repairs as an exigency demands; the employment of guides when necessary; and charges for local and long distance telephone service, and for telegrams, including telegrams for reservation of lodging and sleeping accommodation at hotels, on board trains and steamers, or relating thereto, on public business.

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of New York City. The scheme was examined and discussed, and a letter containing the conclusions of the Commission forwarded to His Excellency, The Danish Minister. (See Exhibit A.)

7. The Secretary submitted for the inspection of the Commission a selection of photographs of monuments, statues, and fountains in the District of Columbia. They were approved, and the Secretary was authorized to procure a complete set for the records of the Commission, and also to request the members to submit lists of any monuments and fountains, outside of the District of Columbia, photographs of which they think should be obtained.

8. The Secretary submitted for approval the completed plans and tracings of the Mall system, prepared for the Commission. The Commission approved Plan No. 100, showing the existing conditions on the Mall, but it was decided to take no action on the others for the present.

9. The Secretary read the report to the Secretary of War in regard to the proposed memorial arch at Valley Forge prepared by Mr. Olmsted for the committee appointed by the Chairman (Messrs. Burnham, Millet and Olmsted) and also the modification proposed by Mr. Millet; a telegram from Mr. Hastings on the subject was also read. After discussion a modified form of the report was agreed upon and Mr. Olmsted was requested to put it in writing and send it to the Secretary for transmittal to the Secretary of War. (See Exhibit B.)

10. The Secretary read the joint report made to Senator Wetmore by the committee appointed by the Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts and the committee appointed

by the President of the Art Commission of the City of New York relative to the proposed memorial to the North American Indian in New York Harbor; after discussion, upon motion duly made and seconded, the following resolution was adopted:

> "RESOLVED, That the recommendations in the report dated March 13th of the conference between members of this Commission and of the Art Commission of the City of New York upon the questions of art involved in H. R. Bill 18696 be adopted as the recommendations of this Commission, but that it be pointed out in the letter of transmittal to the Committee on the Library that the suggestion of embodying in the act a requirement that the final approval of the design and location of the Memorial be submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts, originated not with the members of that Commission but with those of the Art Commission of the City of New York, and that this Commission expresses no opinion upon this point, but is entirely willing to act if so desired."

11. In accordance with the suggestion of the Commission of Fine Arts that a conference be arranged with the Board of District Commissioners relative to the adoption of a uniform style of school architecture for the District of Columbia, Captain E. M. Markham, representing the Engineer Commissioner, and Municipal Architect Snowden Ashford appeared before the Commission at 11:30 A. M. Many plans and photographs were examined, and the matter considered carefully in all its phases. It was the expressed opinion of the members of the Commission that the Elizabethan style, however admirable and attractive in other cities, is unharmonious in Washington, and that the Georgian style is the most suitable; that pose, quietude, and uniformity in design and color should be sought and adhered to.

Captain Markham also exhibited plans showing the areas which it is thought should be acquired to form the proposed parkway along Rock Creek, connecting Rock Creek Park with Potomac Park. The matter was referred to Mr. Olmsted for investigation and consideration.

12. The next matter brought up was the reference by the Secretary of War to the Commission of Fine Arts of the requests of three artists, Messrs. H. A. Sullwold, Robert I. Aitken, and Laurence M. Loeb, associated with A. Stirling Calder, to enter

the competition for erecting a memorial monument at Fort Recovery, Ohio. The Commission recommended the acceptance of the requests of Messrs. Calder & Loeb, and Mr. Aitken, but deferred action on the request of Mr. Sullwold until information in regard to his standing and qualifications could be procured. Mr. Gilbert offered to get this information.

13. The Chairman gave an account of the correspondence that had passed between him and Mr. William H. Crocker of the Board of Directors of the Panama Pacific Exposition in regard to the suggested visit of the Commission of Fine Arts to San Francisco to assist in selecting a site for the exposition, and also explained how matters stood at the time. No action was taken in the matter.

14. The Secretary read the resolution adopted at the first meeting of the Lincoln Memorial Commission, requiring the Commission of Fine Arts to make suggestions as to the location, plans and designs for a monument or memorial to Lincoln in the City of Washington, to make suggestions in connection with each location considered as to a memorial suited to it and within the limit of cost authorized by the act, and to advise as to the best method of selecting the artists, sculptors and architects to make the proper designs and to execute them. The subject was thoroughly discussed with a view to ascertaining the ideas of each member, and plans for future procedure were tentatively outlined.

Mr. Burnham stated that Mr. Anderson of his Office had prepared under his direction, at the request of members of Congress, a number of drawings of a project which had been suggested for the erection of the Lincoln Memorial on the space between the Capitol and the Union Station, and that he had turned over these drawings to the Commission of Fine Arts. He further stated that he would cause to be prepared a full report upon the different projects which have been suggested or considered for the

rection of the memorial on this space, and requested that the other members of the ommission give the whole matter their most careful consideration between now and the ime of the next meeting, and submit at that time any views or conclusions as to the ite or selection of artists which they think should be embodied in the report of the ommission.

5. At 3:30 P. M., the Commission adjourned to meet at 10 A. M., Friday, May 5, 911, unless sooner called by the Chairman.

APPROVED: D H Burnham

CHAIRMAN.

SECRETARY.

EXHIBIT 4

March 18, 1911.

My dear Sir:

In accordance with my letter to you of March second, the photographs of Mr Gelert's scheme for a summer library with fountain were presented to the Commission of Fine Arts at its meeting held yesterday, and were examined with much interest. The Commission appreciates the courtesy extended by you in submitting these photographs for its inspection and will be glad to bear them in mind in case it is ever called upon to advise in regard to them, or to some project to which they might be applicable. I inclose a copy of the Act of Congress, creating the Commission of Fine Arts, which shows that the Commission has power to act on such questions only when called upon by the President or by any committee of either House of Congress.

The photographs will either be kept in our files for future reference or be returned to you, as you desire.

Believe me, with high regard,

Yours very truly,

SPENCER COSBY,

Colonel, U. S. Army,

Secretary.

His Excellency, Count Moltke,

The Danish Legation.

Exhibit 13

March 23, 1911.

The Honorable

The Secretary of War.

Sir:

In accordance with your endorsement of January 14th relative to a memorial arch to be erected in Valley Forge Park under Act of Congress approved June 25, 1910, the Commission of Fine Arts has examined the design for the arch, has visited through three of its members the proposed site and its surroundings, and begs to submit the following report:

The plans show an arch of the well-known and classic type recognized everywhere as an Arch of Triumph. Assuming the adoption of this type the design is good, and if submitted to this Commission merely for approval or disapproval would without question be approved.

As your endorsement, however, referred the matter to this Commission in general terms "for its good offices", it seems proper to go beyond such formal action and set forth certain ideas which have impressed themselves upon its members in considering the matter. If the plans had come before us at an earlier stage we should not hesitate to suggest that a consideration of these ideas might lead to a better solution of the problem of the Memorial. As it is, realizing the danger that any radical reconsideration of such a project at the eleventh hour, after it has reached the point of readiness to execute, may result in an unfortunate and weakening compromise, we

merely submit these ideas for such consideration as they may seem to deserve, without any recommendation and without conditioning our approval of the submitted design.

1. As to the location. An isolated memorial arch, perhaps more than any other monumental structure, seems to need surroundings that have a definite, obvious and well ordered relation to it. Otherwise its location is apt to have a casual and accidental look utterly incongruous with the ponderous architectural character of the structure itself. If placed on the site pointed out to this Commission, a low knoll in the midst of gently rolling open country, without any natural or artificial feature in its surroundings adequate to fix the orientation of the arch, such a structure could hardly fail to appear casual, unrelated to its environment, and lacking in repose. We understand that it is proposed to deflect the line of the "Boulevard" (a modern curvilinear driveway following the general course of the entrenchments) so as to pass through the arch, and to determine the orientation of the arch by the direction in which this rapidly curving road may happen to run at the point selected. It is doubtful whether this deflection could be managed in such a way as not to look forced, and in any case this road is not at all of such a character as to afford an obvious or adequate visual justification for the placing of the arch.

As a matter of general design every monument and other feature, the location of which is plainly determined by this excellent but obviously modern and sophisticated park road, and which thereby focuses attention upon it as the important controlling feature of the scene, tends by so much to distract attention from the thought of the old entrenchments and camps, for the sake of which alone the whole park exists. Properly the "Boulevard" is a mere incidnt, necessary

to give people convenient access to the scene of the old encampment and especially to such remains of earth works and other objects as may help to bring the past to mind. The more simply and inconspicuously it performs this function the better.

We are inclined to believe that the best location would be spanning the old Gulf Road at the point where it crosses the northwestern circuit of the entrenchments and the "Boulevard". Here the ridge is high, commanding almost the whole encampment and overlooking Washington's Headquarters. Topographically this spot has a more notably centralized and balanced emphasis than any other in the course of the circuit of the entrenchments or any other in the course of the old Gulf Road as it passes through the encampment ground. It is not a small consideration that this site is in view from Washington's Headquarters, the point at which most of the visitors to the locality get their first impressions, and that it is within easy walking distance of that point, whereas the other site is so far that few are likely to reach it except those who take a vehicle.

2. As to the type of the arch. The primary purpose in classic lines of an arch of the type proposed was to make an enduring monument of a triumph in arms, to commemorate a victorious campaign. The tradition of its significance survives with sufficient force to suggest a certain lack of appropriateness in such a structure upon the memorable encampment ground of Valley Forge. It is not successful battle that is here to be commemorated. It is the devoted patience on the part of Washington and his men, their quiet, unshaken loyalty in the face of hunger and cold and the bitter misery of inaction, which alone can make us want to remember that terrible winter of Valley Forge.

It is a question for the designer of a memorial arch in such a place to consider whether a form so universally associated with the celebration of victorious battle could not be avoided. Perhaps for the site we have pointed out, spanning the old Gulf Road where it enters through the line of the entrenchments, an arch might reasonably be designed of a character more nearly related to the austere gateway of a military stronghold.

By direction of the Commission:

Very respectfully,

SPENCER COSBY,

Colonel, U. S. Army,

Secretary.